

Address by Admiral Stansfield Turner
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As a military officer, I long admired the considerable efforts of this Association to ensure good communications on national security issues between the military and American industry. As an intelligence officer, vitally concerned with those same issues, I appreciate the opportunity to be with you tonight and to contribute to that dialogue.

I would like briefly to talk with you about some of the changes which are occurring in the Intelligence Community, particularly as they relate to American business, and to ask your assistance in helping solve some problems which affect both of us.

One of the greatest strengths of the American Intelligence Community is its ability to collect the information which is needed, when it is needed. I could not say that with such confidence were it not for the incredibly sophisticated and effective technical collection capabilities, in signals, photographic and human intelligence, which American industry has developed for us over the years. There is just no question that American intelligence technology is the best in the world and that it has been instrumental in putting us clearly ahead of the Soviet Union in intelligence collection. We are very grateful to you in the business world who make this possible.

Interestingly, though, the very technological successes which you have given to us have generated their own problems. Today, for instance, the quantity of information which our advanced systems can collect almost threatens to swamp us. No intelligence officer, however, will ever complain about being swamped with information. We are always trying to put together a picture puzzle when we have only 20 or 30 percent of the pieces. You always want more pieces to ensure you have all the important ones. Identifying the important pieces--those which are most likely to give shape to the puzzle, is the essence of our task. With your help we have been working on ways to employ computers to screen the large quantities of data which we receive and to then surface only what is worth further review by a human. Since the quantity of information you will help us to collect will almost certainly continue to grow, and since the number of humans available to process it will almost certainly continue to be limited, we will need more and more sophisticated techniques for ensuring that important information is not overlooked.

The importance of being able to screen information quickly and efficiently, even old information which at the time did not seem to be relevant, has been underscored in just the past few weeks. I refer to the issue of the Soviet brigade in Cuba. In 1963 we estimated the ground combat forces which the Soviets had introduced into Cuba had all been withdrawn. It was not until 1978 that we began to have strong suspicions that this was no longer the case. Thanks to an intelligence breakthrough in August of this year, we were able to adduce persuasive evidence that there is now a Soviet combined arms combat brigade in Cuba. Building on that evidence, and using new clues we obtained recently, we have reexamined data from 1962 until present. These probings still persuade us that the combat capability was withdrawn in 1963-64, but also show that by at least the mid-1970s such a capability had been reestablished in essentially its present form; that is, a combined arms brigade with three motorized infantry battalions, one tank battalion, and all of the normal artillery, anti-aircraft, anti-tank, and other support elements common to a Soviet combatant unit of this size. This relook at 17 years worth of stored data could not have been done without the prodigious computer storage, retrieval and sorting capabilities in which American industry excels.

Another problem of success with the sophisticated equipments which you provide for us is that much of it has been of such outstanding quality that it has lasted much longer than was expected. You make us feel like the aborigine who spent the morning building a better boomerang, and the afternoon trying to get rid of the old one. This is literally one of the great, unsung accomplishments of American industry. It has not only enabled us to carry out our job with a very high degree of reliability, it has also saved us a lot of money. Consequently, over the last half dozen years our annual operating expenses were below normal. We lived off of the systems that we expected would wear out several years ago. We took the money that we saved and invested it in more research and development for new collection systems--in short, we undertook more such development than our budget would have otherwise permitted.

But windfalls always seem to come to an end. Today we face the block obsolescence of a number of these long-lived systems. Quite simply, replacing them all at once is more than we can afford. We will be forced to be very discriminating in what we purchase from the systems which you have developed for us. We will no longer be able to buy all of the new or improved capabilities that you can offer to us. Our planning will have to reflect our most critical needs. We will have to assess carefully the technological opportunities presented to us. At the same time, we will continue to need the ingenuity of American industry to stay ahead--perhaps need it even more than ever. What this means is continued development of a number of new concepts, but full pursuit of only a few. We will need your help in identifying areas of the largest payoff per dollar spent. Just doing more or being more efficient may not be enough to justify new investments.

One area which I have already mentioned and that I suspect will qualify for new expenditures is data processing and handling. Another, is entirely new techniques of collecting data, for we have by no means reached the limits of your ability to innovate for us. Still a third, is the application of large-scale integrated circuit technology for intelligence applications. Decisions--yours and mine--on whether these or other areas are most worthy of investment will be difficult. Still, I think that reaching them together can be the cornerstone of an even stronger and more productive relationship between American security industries and the Intelligence Community.

A second strength of American intelligence has traditionally been the quality of the finished intelligence which has been produced. And here, too, there has always been a strong, and quite legal and proper link between the American business and the intelligence communities. Today as economic issues affect more and more of our national decisions, the importance of this link increases. We are more than grateful for your continuing support and advice.

I am attempting to make this more of a two-way street. Over the past two and one-half years, beginning with our first unclassified study on the world energy situation, we have published for the public more than 300 studies, analyses, or statistical summaries on world issues. They have, I believe, contributed to a better informed citizenry, and have stimulated important national debate.

Two months ago, we published an updated version of that first energy study, confirming the general conclusions of the original study. It not only stimulated discussions here at home, it even elicited a strong reaction from the Soviets. So you see, the debate is enlarging.

Today we are also working actively with the Department of Commerce to find ways of periodically briefing American businessmen about economic, political and military developments in different areas of the world. It seems to me particularly important, considering the increasingly competitive international business climate, that if information exists within our government which could assist the American business community, it should be shared with you to the greatest extent possible.

I need not stress that there are inherent problems in attempting to do this. One is ensuring that we can continue to protect our sources of information; another is being scrupulously sure that one business is not given preferential treatment over another; another is the absolute necessity of our protecting proprietary information when it is shared with us. I might also say, paranthetically, that while businessmen sometimes write to us to compliment the work we do in publishing information, they also sometimes take exception when we publish something about their areas of interests. It's alright, they say, for us to publish about Joe's industry but not theirs. I ask your forbearance. We are trying to be evenhanded, writing reports where there is a need for them, and working to support all American business. Despite these problems, I am persuaded that we can do more for you. I am committed to trying to do so.

At the same time, I believe, the potential of intelligence to contribute to you and to the national security is endangered today. Imbalances have developed and we need your active support in correcting them.

Let me mention first, the improper release of classified information. This practice is fast becoming our most serious problem. Leaks from within the government are a big part of this problem. It is a part which we are working to control, especially through better security measures and through generating a renewed sense of respect for classified information by those with access to it.

Another part of the problem results from the authorship of books and articles intended to disrupt legitimate intelligence activities. We should be able to do something about this but are severely constrained. Phillip Agee, a former CIA employee, is now making a profession of exposing everything which he learned about the CIA when in it or which he has found out since. He and others regularly publish a slick bulletin called "Covert Action." Its professed objective is to identify undercover American intelligence officers around the world. Obviously, once identified, an intelligence officer and his or her family become the target of terrorists and kooks alike. Their potential effectiveness is diminished, and our attention is diverted to protecting or moving them rather than concentrating on the work that we are authorized to do. I have virtually no legal recourse against this kind of activity.

That in itself is saying something because there are some thirty U.S. laws which make it a crime to reveal tax information, commodity futures, and other commercial information. Almost no comparable legislation protects national security information. The law under which we generally must prosecute an individual for revealing classified information is the antiquated Espionage Act of 1917. Under it, proof of intent to harm the United States is required. You don't need to be a lawyer to appreciate the difficulty in proving intent of any kind. As long as an individual professes to believe that America would be better off as a result of his actions, it is difficult to prove that he intends to harm the country. We are proposing legislation to correct this and I ask your support.

Second, not only can we not protect ourselves and the country from unscrupulous authors under existing laws, there are some laws which actually help such people. One is the Freedom of Information Act. Now I support fully the concept of freedom of information. American citizens should be able to find out what information the government has stored away about them; what the government is doing, how it is being managed, and how taxes are being spent. But for their good and for the good of the country, some information must be protected. Sometimes we forget that once information is public, it is also available to our enemies to employ against us. An intelligence organization cannot operate totally in the open. Some information certainly should be available from intelligence files, but unless we can protect the identity of our sources and how we go about our work, we will soon be out of business--just as you would be if your unique production processes or your competitive bids could not be protected from your competitors.

Every year we spend nearly \$3 million dollars to answer over 4,000 Freedom of Information Act requests. Some of them come from children; some are form letters; some come from each student in a high school civics class, just to explore how the government works. Each request costs the taxpayer, on the average, over \$800. Some cost much more. We have been required, for example, to devote two people full-time during the past three years to providing information requested by Mr. Agee alone. The irony of the government's employing people to help an individual whose avowed purpose is to destroy a duly constituted agency of the very government which is helping him is, I am sure, not lost on this audience. Note that if the chief of Soviet intelligence were to write us, we would be obliged by this law to respond within ten days. We are also proposing legislation to correct this situation, and again I ask your support.

These two problems I have cited are, I think, inevitable in a society as free as ours--and I assure you I would not trade shoes with Yuriy (Uri) Andropov, my counterpart in the Soviet Union, even though he has neither the financial nor public impediments on his actions that I do. The advantages in a free society of being able to express divergent, even unorthodox views is absolutely essential if good intelligence is to be produced. Exposing the contrary view is fundamental to solid intelligence. And because our society encourages such views to come forward, they will always be with us. We can live with them. But at the moment, the pendulum has swung so far that the Intelligence Community and, as a result, the national security, is being harmed. The legislation we are proposing seeks to achieve a more reasonable balance between secrecy and openness.

In conclusion then, your Intelligence Community is undergoing substantial change. Change is never easy or comfortable in any organization--as you've seen from our press. But American business understands this perhaps better than any other segment of society. The ability to adapt and change as requirements change has been one of your great strengths.

I ask you tonight for your understanding, your support, and your help as we in the Intelligence Community adapt to the rather profound changes which have been taking place around us, over the past four to five years.

Your contribution to our intelligence work continues to be of unparalleled importance. In the end it may well determine whether we stay ahead or fall behind.

I thank you once again for the contribution that you and all of American business have traditionally made to this nation.